

(1) To Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities.

The goals and strategies below are based on the results of the triennial assessment conducted in 2006, public input, federal standards and indicators, recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council and NDVR's Managing for Results Strategic Planning. They are designed to support achievement of VR's goals and priorities identified in *Attachment 4.11 (c)(1)*.

Notations are made by the goals that include innovation, expansion and improvement of services and/or outreach activities.

Many strategies from the state plan submitted in July 2006 and 2007 remain viable and will be continued during this plan period. Some strategies support achievement of more than one of VR's goals.

Goal 1: Achieve 459 Employer-Initiated Contacts.

Strategy 1.1 - *Continue emphasis on the Business Services Initiative and support partnerships with business, industry and/or labor as appropriate.*

Strategy 1.2 - *Continue to develop networks with state economic development authorities and other employment entities at the state and regional offices.*

Strategy 1.3 – *Continue to expand contacts with-businesses throughout the state.*

Strategy 1.4 - *Continue to establish and monitor annual Business Services performance measures.*

Goal 2: Develop Phase 3 of the Integrated Public Education/Awareness Campaign On VR Services And Disability-Related Issues By September 30, 2009.

Innovation/Expansion and Outreach

Strategy 2.1 – *Work with the SRC and its Public Relations committee to develop Phase 3 and explore approaches that market to specific groups such as American Indians, Veterans, New Americans and Youth.*

Strategy 2.2 – *Continue to work with the Rocky Mountain Disability Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC) to strengthen the regional ADA Leadership Network.*

Strategy 2.3 - Continue to develop networks with state economic development authorities and other employment entities at the state and regional offices.

Strategy 2.4 - Continue to establish and monitor annual Business Services performance measures.

Goal 3: Implement Strategies 3.1 – 3.7 To Maintain Collaboration With Partners Under The Workforce Investment Act And Related Agencies.

Strategy 3.1 – Continue the Rural Services Initiative throughout the State and update the MOU with the ND Agriculture Department.

Strategy 3.2 - Continue to participate as members of the Workforce Development Council, subcommittees and workgroups, and support the strategic initiative to attract, retain and expand recruitment of Native Americans and veterans.

Strategy 3.3 – Update the MOU with the Workforce Development Council by the due date.

Strategy 3.4 - Continue to develop networks with state economic development authorities and other employment entities at the state and regional offices.

Strategy 3.5 – Continue to support relationships between vocational rehabilitation regional offices and centers for independent living.

Strategy 3.6 - Continue involvement with statewide Transportation Committee.

Strategy 3.7 – Explore potential areas for collaboration and partnerships with the Veterans Administration, Native American groups, New Americans groups and other disability groups as appropriate.

Goal 4: Continue Implementation Of Regional Transition Plans In Coordination With Regional Partners Across The State.

Expand and Improve

Strategy 4.1- Continue participation as a member of the Statewide Transition Steering Council.

Strategy 4.2 – Continue working with the chair of the Statewide Transition Steering Council to identify and communicate the roles of both the State and Regional Steering Councils.

Strategy 4.3 – Update the MOU with Transition partners as necessary.

Strategy 4.4 – *Maintain annual contacts with disability support staff from the North Dakota University System.*

Strategy 4.5 – *Work with Transition Teams, college staff and appropriate others to determine if a pilot project for college students who are VR clients can be developed.*

Strategy 4.6 – *Explore development of a separate, interactive website for teens, young adults and parents.*

Strategy 4.7 – *Hold a joint Vocational Rehabilitation/Transition Conference in October 2008.*

Strategy 4.8 – *Participate as a member of the new Youth Leadership Initiative.*

Goal 5: Meet federal Standard 1 – Employment Outcomes.

Strategy 5.1 - *Evaluate performance in meeting the federal Standards and Performance Indicators and take necessary action to improve performance that does not meet the standards.*

Goal 6: Meet Federal Standard 2 – Service Rate To Minorities.

Expand/Improve/Outreach

Strategy 6.1* - *Schedule meetings with 121 Projects at least twice per year to facilitate ongoing relationships.*

Strategy 6.2 - *Continue to provide technical assistance and support to the four 121 Projects.*

Strategy 6.3* - *Support participation in training opportunities to increase cultural awareness and understanding of minority populations.*

Strategy 6.4 - *Support the Workforce Development Council's strategic initiative to attract, retain and expand recruitment of Native Americans and veterans.*

Strategy 6.5 - *Work with the SRC and its Public Relations committee to develop Phase 3 of the public education campaign and explore approaches that market to specific groups such as Native Americans, Veterans and New Americans.*

Strategy 6.6 – *Work with the SRC Resource Committee, the Designated State Agency Human Resource Division and other state VR agencies to identify recruitment strategies focusing on Native Americans and other minority groups.*

Strategy 6.7* - *Meet with various referral sources to clarify the purpose of Vocational Rehabilitation.*

Strategy 6.8* – *Assess the specific interests and expertise of staff related to minority populations.*

** Indicates strategy related to ND's PIP to meet Standard 2*

Goal 7: Establish And Monitor Statewide And Regional Strategic Performance Measures That Are Focused On Employment Results.
Expand and Improve

Strategy 7.1 – *Each quarter, evaluate performance in meeting statewide and regional employment goals. Take action to improve performance where necessary.*

Strategy 7.2 – *Continue to monitor self-employment practices and results.*

Strategy 7.3 – *Continue to look at all aspects of the VR process during the case reviews, including Vocational Guidance and Counseling and Assessment. Provide feedback and training as necessary.*

Strategy 7.4 – *Monitor and evaluate new outcome-based reimbursement for supported employment services implemented October 2007.*

Goal 8: Continue To Meet The CSPD Goal That All VR Counselors And Regional Administrators Will Meet The Qualified Rehabilitation Professional Standards Within 5 Years Of Hire.

Strategy 8.1 - *Financially support staff in attaining Qualified Rehabilitation Professional status.*

Strategy 8.2 - *Monitor staff progress in achieving Qualified Rehabilitation Professional status to ensure staff achieve within the time frame.*

Strategy 8.3 – *Continue to monitor and support the Success in Leadership project designed to study retention of VR staff. Analyze the results of the study and determine any needed changes.*

Strategy 8.4 – *Work with the SRC Resource Committee, the Designated State Agency Human Resource Division and other state VR agencies to identify recruitment strategies focusing on Native Americans and other minority groups.*

Strategy 8.5 – *Work with the SRC Resource Committee, the Designated State Agency Human Resource Division and the Counselor II & III Reclassification Workgroup to determine if reclassification is indicated.*

Goal 9: Continue To Enhance Assistive Technology Efforts By Achieving 100% Of Strategies 9.1 – 9.4.

Expand and Improve

Strategy 9.1 – *Upgrade the assistive technology lab located in the Bismarck regional VR office and determine if it will be expanded to also include a business center.*

Strategy 9.2 – *Establish a new assistive technology lab/business center in the Minot regional VR office.*

Strategy 9.3 – *Continue implementation of the new AT screening tool developed through the North Dakota Success in Leadership group.*

Strategy 9.4 – *Maintain membership in the Interagency Project for Assistive Technology (IPAT) Consumer Advisory Council.*

See Page 6 of this attachment for additional information on assistive technology.

(2) To Carry Out Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities

In North Dakota, 7.6% of the population is comprised of minorities. Native Americans are the largest of these minority groups at 4.9%. During FFY 2007 of all the individuals who became employed through VR services, 11% were minorities. This figure is up from 7.2% in FFY 2005 and 9% in FFY 2006.

The breakdown of minorities employed during FFY 2007 is as follows: 7.3% were Native Americans, 1.7% Hispanic, 1.2% Black and 0.8% Asian/Pacific Islander. (Note: the sum of these percentages does not equal the total percentage since people are now able to select more than one race.) These figures are slightly higher than last year and are expected to be similar during this next year.

There are also four Section 121 Projects for Native Americans operating in the state. Both the state and regional vocational rehabilitation offices provide technical assistance to the 121 projects, as requested. These four programs are also served by the Client Assistance Program. In addition to providing technical assistance, vocational rehabilitation has itinerant counselors who visit the reservations to work

together with the projects to provide services otherwise not available, or to meet with those individuals who prefer to work with vocational rehabilitation. Vocational rehabilitation also coordinates off reservation services for individuals and invites 121 Project staff to any training activities coordinated through our office.

As described in *Attachment 4.11(a)*, one aspect of the triennial assessment of rehabilitation needs included three separate Focus Groups focusing on Native Americans and their rehabilitation needs. VR shared the results of these Focus Groups with the 121 Project Directors.

Goal 2, Strategy 2.1, Goal 3, Strategies 3.2 and 3.7 and Goal 6, Strategies 6.1 – 6.8 in the preceding section (1) identify additional activities related to outreach and services to minorities.

Goal 7, Strategy 7.4 is specific to supported employment services.

(3) *To Overcome Identified Barriers Relating to Equitable Access to and Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.*

No major barriers to equitable access and participation have been identified by individuals with disabilities in either the state VR services or supported employment services programs. All individuals closed from VR receive a survey, which is designed to solicit feedback on their level of satisfaction with their participation in decision-making, the services they received, their employment, if applicable, as well as anything additional they would like to comment on. All surveys mailed during FFY 05 and prior included a question related to accessing services. Survey results are shared with the regional offices and the Rehabilitation Council. No barriers to equitable access have been identified.

Assistive Technology: Vocational rehabilitation continues to support assistive technology as an integral part of each stage of the VR process. The assistive technology screening tool currently used during the intake process with all applicants was revised and implemented during FFY 2008. The purpose of the revision was to increase the effectiveness of the tool and thereby improve the quality of services provided to VR clients. When assistive technology needs are identified further assessment and/or referral are provided as necessary.

Goal 9, Strategies 9.1 – 9.4 identify additional activities related to assistive technology. The assistive technology labs referenced in *Strategies 9.1 and 9.2* can be used by individuals and businesses located anywhere in the state. Adding the lab in Grand Forks during FFY 2008 made it more convenient for people in the northeastern part of the state. In addition, the Interagency Project for Assistive Technology (IPAT) has a lab located in Fargo North Dakota. The IPAT lab and staff are also available to individuals throughout the state.

Community Rehabilitation Programs: The results of the statewide survey of VR staff regarding Community Rehabilitation Programs is discussed in *Attachment 4.11(a)*. Training needs related to improving services were identified and have been shared with the CRP RCEP. In addition, VR is considering creating in-state training that would provide a general overview of vocational rehabilitation services that could be provided to new CRP staff. See *Attachment 4.11(a)* for further information.